

Peter Salem and The Battle of Bunker Hill

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Peter Salem

Born into slavery in 1750, Peter as a young man worked the farms of his owner Jehrimiah Belknap. Later he was sold to a patriot Maj. Lawson Buckminster who temporarily emancipated Peter so he could serve in the Minute Men of Massachusetts..

First, he served in Captain Simon Edgell's Framingham company. After, he transferred to Captain Thomas Drury's company which was part of Colonel John Nixon's 5th Massachusetts Regiment. There, he fought the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The Battle of Bunker Hill

The Battle of Bunker Hill, also known as the Battle of Breed's Hill, took place on June 17, 1775 in Charleston, now part of modern day Boston. Most of the fighting took place on Breed's Hill about a quarter of a mile across the Charles River from the north shore of Boston. Bunker Hill was the American Revolution's first major battle. The Battles of Lexington and Concord took place approximately two months before the Battle of Bunker Hill. At this time over 15,000 colonial forces had gathered in the Boston area to face a British army of 5,000 or more troops stationed nearby. The colonists opted to defend Bunker's Hill and Breed's Hill after learning that British general Thomas Gage was set to capture Dorchester Heights, one of two clear places from which Boston was vulnerable to artillery fire. Before being attacked by 2,300 approaching British troops, the colonists constructed a redoubt atop Breed's Hill. The attackers were initially stopped by colonial troops' heavy fire, but on the second or third advance, the attackers took the redoubt and forced the remaining defenders to leave. More than 1,000 British soldiers and about 450 American soldiers were killed.

Legacy of the Battle of Bunker Hill

The Battle of Bunker Hill served as the first major battle in the American Revolution. Even though the British did win and Pennsylvania was under their control, this battle helped to boost the morale of many American soldiers. Strengthening their beliefs and will to fight. The Patriots that fought in this battle realized that defeating the British army in all their military might wasn't an impossible task. The British also learned that this wouldn't be a short and cheap fight. They would have to put a lot of men and money in if they wanted to win this war.

Peter's Contributions

Peter Salem made many contributions to the revolution. He was one of the first people to rush in and attempt to fortify the defenses around the vulnerable area of Charleston. Peter also fought in many battles such as Concord, Bunker Hill, Saratoga, Monmouth, and Stoney Point. In addition, he was accredited with the killing of Maj. John Pitcairn, one of the Patriots' most formidable enemies. Finally, Peter served a total of 4 years and 8 months serving in the militia.

Citations

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